

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Urban Spaces after Socialism

#### Etnographies of Public Places in Eurasian Cities

Tsypylma Darieva, Wolfgang Kaschuba, Melanie Krebs (eds),

Ed. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/New York, 2011, 328 p.

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The year 1989 brings many profound transformations in all the social, economic and especially political fields. So now, we are witnessing an increased importance given to research on this subject, and its approach in many various studies. Each of them tries to provide information in terms of accuracy and precision.

The book entitled *Urban Spaces after Socialism. Etnographies of Public Places in Eurasian Cities*, published in 2011, represents a collection of papers, resulted after a workshop organized in September 2009 at Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia). This workshop had been entitled "Urban Spaces – Caucasian Places. Transformations in Capital Cities". After that, in February 2010, at the Department for European Ethnology (Humboldt University Berlin) discussions took place in a one day workshop. These two events had been organized by the project team and were entitled "Identity Politics in the South Caucasus: National Representation, Postsocialist Society and Urban Public Space".

The book structure begins with an Introduction on the Sights and Signs of Postsocialist Urbanism in Eurasia, realized by the two of the three editors, Tsypylma Darieva and Wolfgang Kaschuba, then the collection of the articles is divided into two parts.

The first part, entitled **Contours and Places** contains six scientific papers extended on over 147 pages. In the first paper, *Gradeur and Decay of the "Soviet Byzantium": Spaces,*

*Peoples and Memories of Tashkent, Uzbekistan*, the author explores the urban phenomenon of Tashkentului, by the memories and narations of the resident inhabitants. Even from the first pages, the autor wants to familiarize the reader with the place, culture or community of the analyzed area.

For the second paper, *The Seond City as the First City: The Development of Gyumri from an Anthropological Perspective*, the author Gayane Shagoyan deals with certain aspects of city development in Leninankan (today called Gyumri), the second largest city of the Soviet Armenia, which has borrowed many principles of the Leningrad city, a city guide for the development of communist countries. The author wonders why the city of Gyumri has not borrowed the above mentioned various aspects of development in Yerevan, a city with real possibilities as a true competitor for the first one.

*Tbilisi in City Maps: Symbolic Construction of an Urban Landscape*, by Madlen Pilz, is a paper that evokes the importance of maps in drowing the urban landscape in Georgia. As a weak point, the author mentions, from the begining, that the tourist city maps of Tbilisi, realized between 1980 and 2008, offer some empirical data for the analysis of a social order construction.

In *Maiden Tower Goes International? Representing Baku in a Gloal World*, Melanie Krebs shows that "apart from the economic and social hard ships, this lack of international

acknowledgement became another problem for a political class that wanted to present both to the outside world and to their own citizens a strong nation deeply rooted in history and ready to take on the challenges to the future." This article is about a case study that investigates the fact that officially policy-makers try to built a brand for Baku, the Capital City of Azerbaijan.

*Yerevan Sacra: Old and New Sacred Centers in the Urban Space*, Levon Abrahamian analyzes the urbanization process in Yerevan. Among other aspects, the author evokes the very fast process of city urbanization, so that the city seemed to fail in forming its specific traditions and urban spaces, including the historical ones. In this article the author also focuses on other aspects of the religious urban spaces and on the controversy between religious and mundane urban spaces, when the sacre tries to gain and even to take a revenge here.

The last paper of the second part by Tsypylma Darieva, entitled *A "Remarkable Gift" in a Postcolonial City: The Past and Present of the Baku Promenade*, presents an evolution in time of Baku city and shows the multitude of changes it has suffered, from a postcolonial city to an industrial one.

The second part of the book, entitled **Places and Voices**, contains the same number of papers and it is more empirically than the previous one. The studies here are more descriptive, more narative than in the first part of the book.

The article entitled *Every City Has the Flea Market it Deserves: The Phenomenon of Urban Flea Markets in Sankt Petersburg*, by Oleg Pachenkov, starts with an empirically study about Sankt Petersburg, about the flea market, showing its transformations within the last 20 years.

The following article, *Why are the Dolls Laughing? Tbilisi between Intelligentsia Culture and Socialist Labor*, by Zaza Shatirishvili and Paul Manning realize an

interdisciplinary approach, the analysis on two of the socialist historical elements of Tbilisi culture, relected by the dolls image.

*Between the Center of Jazz and the Capital of Muslim Culture: Insights of Baku's Public and Everyday Life*, a paper by Sergey Rumyansev and Sevil Huseynova offers some perspectives, for relations dynamics between the authorities and some groups of city-dwellers, for their case study, the city of Baku.

Another article *Gay Culture and Public Places in Tbilisi*, author Shorena Gabunia argues that the homosexuality is not a new or a strange social phenomenon for the culture of Tbilisi. The subject was also studied in a research project leded by the author in 2009, and had as targets group some people representing such minority groups. In this article, the author wants to show which public spaces are empowered by this community and how the individual consumption affects the building of an identity.

Paul Manning and Zaza Shatirishvili in their paper entitled *The Exoticism and Eroticism of the City: The "kinto" and his City* begin with a motto and use a mixture of ethnographic, semiotic, historical and literary methodologies in order to describe the atmosphere in the Tbilisi town during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*"Nested Globalization" in Osh Kyrgyzstan: Urban Youth Culture in a "Southern" City* by Stefan B. Kirmse shows that cultural globalization and urbanism play a subordinate role in discussions of the former Soviet South. This article also discusses young people's experiences of cultural globalization in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. This article offers, among other aspects, an useful perspective for exploring the process and shows the cultural globalization effects in the region.

This book ends with an Afterword for Urban (post)Socialism realized by Alaina Lemon, with some Notes on Contributors and with an Index of Names and Places.

## **Urbanization: An Introduction to Urban Geography, Third Edition**

Paul L. Knox, Virginia Tech, Linda M. McCarthy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Prentice Hall, 2012, 480 p.  
ISBN-10: 0321736435, ISBN-13: 9780321736437

**Reviewed by** Mirela PARASCHIV, University of Bucharest, Romania

Urbanization is a continuous challenge for the geographical research due to the complexity of the process that is always changing and has new forms and methods of manifestation. The book *"Urbanization: An Introduction to Urban Geography, Third Edition"* captures precisely these urbanization features, from the perspective of its effects on population in various development stages. The analysis of the current urbanization patterns is made with an approach to the specific development directions of urban geography. Thus, general theories or those related to the urban space issues are correlated with the evolution of cities, going through case studies and geographical analysis of recent situation conditioned by the urbanization process.

The book has a strong theoretic and synthetic footprint of the urban geographical researches, following a historical perspective of the urbanization process. The urban space is investigated through the United States of America urban system, but the analysis direction is global and includes detailed perspectives from the less developed countries.

The five parts of the volume, distributed in 15 chapters, start with a general statement of the theme and follow with a detailed critical analysis of the urbanization phenomena. Thus, the first part makes a short summary of the research approaches and methods of urban geographical issues, highlighting a number of related concepts and also, general effects of the urbanization. The urban geography objective is established to identify the spatial patterns of urban land use and of spatial models generated through demographic and socio-economic differences in the population.

Space, territoriality, distance and place are the notions considered to be the foundation concepts of urban geography through the relation and the direct influence they have over the population. The geographical approaches, such as the spatial descriptive analysis, the behavioural, humanistic, feminist one and the post-structural ones are explained for their complementarities in the description of the urbanizing process. The comment of the different research approaches in the urban geography is followed in the next chapters of the book by some classical concrete examples. The urbanization results are analysed as comprising the economic, demographic, political, cultural, technological, social and environmental changes observed in the character and the dynamics of the urban system, the social ecology and the urbanism, seen as the whole of the social interaction forms and the ways of living developed in the urban environment.

The second part represents a historical investigation of the urban spaces evolution, from the appearance of the first towns to the new forms of hyper-urbanization. Starting with a brief mention of the factors that gave rise to the development of human settlements as cities, the emergence regions are analyzed and the global urban expansion directions, until the industrial revolution stage which was the moment of decisive transformation in the urbanization patterns. The chapter concerning the detailed analysis of the United States of America urban system is supported by the examination of the evolutionary American urban geography theories, which have become classics and a reference point in the urbanization process is seen also in the

context of North American cities transition to widespread phenomena of metropolis development and suburbanization. The globalization phenomenon is supported by completing the chapter with case studies concerning the Canadian, European, Australian and Japanese urban systems.

The peculiarities in the urbanization process of the less developed countries are captured in the third part of the book. The analysis of the urban spaces in the Latin America, Africa and Asia is done by a continue reporting to the developed regions. Also, the colonial forms of the urbanization in the under-developed countries are explained on the economic development theories basis. The analysis of the urban spaces from the major empires to the actual megacities as a result of the hyper-urbanization is then detailed through the identification of the land use and urban space patterns in the Latin-American, African, Islamic, southern, south-eastern and east-Asiatic cities.

The urban geography of the less developed countries brings into discussion the main issues in these areas. The urban poverty is the central phenomenon of the socio-spatial relationships linked to the urbanization in the under-developed countries. The poverty causes are the non-functional economies, with predominance of the informal sector of activity, housing and poor urban services, but also the environmental degradation. The authors 'investigated solutions to tackle the urbanization issues from the less developed countries are integrated in the larger context of the aspirations concerning sustainable urban development. Thus, some changes are suggested, changes that that would result from the implementation of some actions that address the economic, environmental, demographical and political aspects of the under-developed urban spaces. In the same time, a paradox of the globalization is highlighted, namely, one that has negative impacts in the cities from the less developed regions on the basis of the international competition in the economic global system. The interesting issue of the globalization influence over the

urbanization in these areas is focused in this chapter only on the response of the urban governance through the observed directions in the politics conducted by the local decisional factors. There is a lack of critical detail necessary for the current implications of the globalization process on urban systems in the underdeveloped states.

The forth part of the paper includes a theoretical detail on the role of the main population groups as decisional factors in directing the urbanization process. In this context, the socio-spatial relationships are analysed, especially those from the real-estate market, with a special regard over the economic aspects, and then correlated with changing lifestyles, social policies and gentrification and residential segregation phenomena. The extensive theoretical comments that follow the capture of some patterns of the population-urban space relationship have the fundament on statistical information. Also, the bidirectional relationships between the urbanization and the changes in governance and urban development policies are tracked. The analysis of these relationships is realised especially through the explanation of the historical stages of change in the urban governance, behind various influences (economic, social, cultural and technological).

The last part of the book captures the role of the urban policies and territorial planning as a result and generating factor of the urbanization dynamics. Like in most of the volume chapters, the theme analysis starts from an evolutionary historical context treatment, from investigating the main models and objectives followed in sustaining the policies and different urban planning strategies in the United States of America. In the same geographical context, there are followed especially the residential patterns and the implied phenomena as a result of the economic and social changes. In this way, the residential segregation is approached through the territoriality concept which explains some groups' tendency, customized by social status, ethnicity, type of housing or lifestyle, to establish forms of

power and domination in certain areas of the cities. The main factor of the spatial urban segregation is considered to be the socio-economic polarization and the preferential promotion of certain lifestyles. The different ways and stages of urban planning are highlighted also through architectural characteristics of the urban landscapes as an answer to the dynamics of the social, cultural and economic changes. In the same time, there are some arguments brought in favor of a socio-spatial dialectic where the people modify and create the urban spaces in function of their needs, but they are partially conditioned in their actions by the spaces where they live. The prominence of this relationships' theory between the city and the social and individual population behaviour is realised through detailing of the postmodern concerns in the field of urban geography, concerns related to gender and perception of the deviant behaviours.

The last chapter of the volume is dedicated to the analysis of some extreme issues generated by the different models of urbanization. Following a progressive highlighting of the social difficulties in the North-American industrial cities to the neoliberal ones, the poverty, the criminality, the homeless phenomenon, the environmental and the infrastructure issues are discussed both theoretical (by evidencing some territorial manifestation patterns) and through statistical information from American and European urban regions.

Since the targets are the students and the young researchers in geography, the general structure of the book follows a teaching logic, extremely interesting also for the experimented professors. Thus, each chapter starts with mentioning the goals for the analysis, with highlighting the concrete skills that the readers will achieve and a resume of the developed general ideas. All the chapters continue with the historical-geographic context that explains the current issues of the urbanization. There are also inserted in the text some brief essays on short tapes with additional topics to the main subject, but also

photos, maps, tables and relevant graphics that try to complete the general study. But all the used graphical materials are cited in the text as general comments, linked through the topics by the information that details a map, a table or a scheme. The concrete information that they transmit are not discussed and the interpretation is left to the reader's attention. This would be necessary, especially in the books' logics, that the information transmitted by the graphical materials to be interpreted in detail by the authors in order to deepen the analysis and to avoid any uninformed interpretation. Each chapter ends with an inventory of the new concepts presented in the paper and with recommendations for concrete activities that would increase the knowledge and the overall vision. In the same teaching logics, the book concludes with a group of footnotes and references for each chapter, but also with a glossary of the most important notions used in the volume, selected as relevant for the urbanization geographical research.

This third edition of the study regarding the urbanization process fundamentals in the urban geography represents a revision and an update of the previous editions. The changes that have been made for the current edition are mainly linked to the restructuring of the material for a better logic for the main subject of debate. Thus, the chapters and the content have been reorganized in just 15 chapters from 18 in the previous editions. On the other hand, there were included new texts and information with concrete examples for current issues (global financial crisis, students that became homeless, earthquakes in Haiti and Japan), both in the urban system of the United States of America and in the international context. Also, the book includes new geographical subjects, such as gender discrimination, environmental problems induced by the brownfields and greenfields, intelligent development and green urbanism. The current edition has been updated with a website for completing the experience of understanding the urbanization in a geographical context.

*"Urbanization: An Introduction to Urban Geography, Third Edition"* is a very attractive book through the exposed problem, the highlighted geographical research information, the organization and the style of writing for all types of readers. The volume is an essential reference for the international urban geography, thanks to the complementarity achieved between synthesizing the theories regarding the urbanization process and the concrete deepening through quantitative and qualitative methods in terms of current issues for the urban space.

**Roşia Montană in Universal History: International Conference,  
11-12 November 2011**

Pompei Cocean (editor), Cluj University Press, 2012, 198 p.  
ISBN 978-973-595-361-4

**Reviewed by** Irina SAGHIN, University of Bucharest, Romania

Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RGMC) project is one of the main issues discussed since 1999 in the Romanian Medias and in the academic environment, opening more and more debates on the impacts that the project will have. This phenomenon has the tendency to create really critical and extremist attitudes and it groups people into three main categories: those who see the RGMC as a saviour for the entire region and do not take in consideration any other "adverse effect", others who have a clear vision of the project and try to balance the facts in order to provide a realistic opinion and those who have the tendency to see only the negative aspects and take the eco-civic spirit to a very high level dissemination.

The book entitled *Roşia Montană in Universal History*, published in 2012, represents a collection of papers presented during the conference with the same title that took place between 11th-12<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 in Cluj-Napoca organised by the Romanian Academy, Babeş- Bolyai University and ICOMOS Romania. The book is composed of a conference resolution with 16 ideas that were discussed and agreed by the participants and 24 papers that present various points of view, both national and international, from different academic fields.

The structure of the book is very well organised, starting from the first paper with an

overview of the Romanian Academy, through the so-called *Position of the Romanian Academy on the Gold Mining Project in the Apuseni Mountains* presented by Ionel Haiduc that is like a general statement for the rest of the articles presented in the book. The general opinion is that the RGMC Project has a negative impact on various fields of national interest and it will be highlighted also during the following articles.

The next two papers: *"The Gold Quadrilateral" in the Apuseni Mountains and the Gold-Silver Ores Mining Dilemma* by Ioan Marza and *Roşia Montană Deposit and its Associated Mineral Substances* by Aurel Sântimbreanu try to present the geological situation in the area by highlighting the effects that the exploitation could have, the rare and disperse metals in these deposits and also they give solutions to avoid the disaster that Gold Corporation could provoke by creating the Roşia Montană National Park or by transforming it in a beautiful and prosperous settlement.

Archaeological and cultural heritage occupy also a very important place in the volume's hierarchy with two papers on *The Archaeological Patrimony of Roşia Montană* (Ioan Piso) and *Roşia Montană: an Assessment of the Cultural Heritage* (Virgil Apostol, Ştefan Bălici) ,both stating that there is insufficient research in the area concerning the real patrimony. The first one underlines the

discovery of the tablets from the Roman law in the area and signalises the illegalities committed by the Romanian authorities, especially by the Ministry of Culture and Cults. The second one is based more on the Association "Architecture, Restoration, Archaeology" (ARA) report on the idea of adding Roşia Montană to Romania's Tentative List for the World Heritage and tries to emphasize the outstanding example of mining landscape developed over a very long period of time.

The most part of the articles concern the geographical domain, more precisely 14 papers, divided into two main areas of interest- physical and environmental geography and human geography and territorial development. The physical and environmental geography involves articles on climate analysis- *General Climatic Conditions in Roşia Montană Area* by Florin Moldovan, Adina-Eliza Croitoru, Iulian-Horia Holobacă, hydrography – *The Hydrographic Network- Mobilisation Vector of Pollutants in Roşia Montană Area* (Răzvan Batinaş, Victor Sorocovschi), biodiversity- *The Botanical and Anthropogenic Landscape of Roşia Montană* by John. R. Akeroyd, *Natural Reserves and the Biodiversity of Roşia Montană Area* (Viorel Gligor), soil analysis- *Effect of Cyanide on the Soil Quality* by Gheorghe Ianoş, Nicolae Doca, Viaceslav Mazăre and also numerous papers on the landscape and environmental risks produced by the mining activities in the area. All the articles try to underline the problems that could be caused by the mining activity, the severe and long-lasting effects they could have and all give the advice of reconsidering the manner of exploiting the deposit. As previous stated, all the articles have common denominator, the tendency to see only the negative aspects of the RMGC Project. A very interesting article is *Red Sludge Disaster in Hungary* by Janos I. Toth.

In terms of human geography and territorial development, the articles concern tourism - *Tourism-Coordinate of a Long-Term Sustainable Development in the Roşia Montană Area* (Nicolae Ciangă, Cristina

Bolog), agriculture - *Agriculture - A Complementary Economic Branch* ( Sorin Filip and Nicoleta David) and planning - *Principles for Territorial Development in the EU and the RMGC Project* (Andrei Marga, Pompei Cocean). The papers are very well argued through various ideas and also sustained by a number of maps and graphics that present the real situation in the area.

The economical field is not forgotten in the volume, but very well sustained with 4 articles that analyze the costs, the usefulness of the project, the actors involved in the project and also some documents that were unrevealed for the public. Also these articles maintain the idea of somehow criticizing the entire project. A special attention should be awarded to the article concerning politics – *The "Difficulty of Politics" and the Complex Problematic of the Gold Mining at Roşia Montană* by Gheorghe Lencan Stoica who starts the article underlying the evil influence of the politics of anti-politics and the political corruption, but gets into a comparison with the resources of Amazonia under the Brazilian dictatorship and forgets about the Roşia Montană, referring to it just in the end as it is the main idea of corruption in Romania.

The media is also involved through the article *Construction of Risk Regarding RMGC in the Romanian Written Press* by Cosmina-Maria Berindei and Ion Cuceu who is the only one analyzing the so-called objective opinion of the scientists and the subjective one, seen as "the perception of danger".

As a conclusion, the book has the advantage of assessing an interdisciplinary opinion on the RMGC issue, but doesn't succeed in acquiring the real state of the facts without being caught in the negativist spirit influenced by the Medias.

